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1674

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By Sir Matthew Hale

A

LETTER

FROM

Sr *MATTHEW HALE*, Kt

Sometime *Lord Chief Justice* of

ENGLAND;

To One of his

SONS;

After his Recovery from the

SMALL-POX.

LONDON,
Printed by *J. Playford*, for *W. Shrowsbery*, at the Sign of the *Bible* in *Duke-lane*. 1684.

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LETTER

FROM

Sir *MATTHEW HALE*,

To One of his

SONS.

Son ——

ALthough by reaſon of the Contagiouſneſs of your Diſeaſe, and the many dependents I have upon me, I thought it not convenient to come unto you during your ſickneſs; yet I have not been wanting in my earneſt Prayers to Almighty God for you, nor in uſing the beſt means I could for your recovery.

It hath pleaſed God to hear my Prayers for you, and above means and hopes now to reſtore you to a Competent degree of health, for which I return unto him my humble and hearty thanks, and now you are almoſt ready to come abroad again, therefore I have thought fit to write this little Book to you, for theſe reaſons.

1. Becauſe it is not yet ſeaſonable for you to come to me, in reſpect of theſe ſame reaſons above mentioned, which hitherto have reſtrained my coming to you.

2. Becauſe at your coming abroad, you will be ſubject to Temptations, by young and inconſiderate Company, which inſtead of ſerious Thankfulneſs to God for his mercy to you, might perchance perſuade you to a vain, and light jollity: And I thought fit to ſend you theſe Lines to prevent ſuch inconſiderate impreſſions, and to meet you juſt at your coming abroad, to ſeaſon you with more wiſe and ſerious principles.

3. Becauſe you are even now come out of a great and ſore Viſitation, and therefore, in all probability, in the fitteſt temper to receive the impreſſions of a ſerious Epiſtle from your Father.

And I have choſen to put it into this little Volume, becauſe it is ſomewhat too long

for

for a Letter; and may be better preſerved for your future uſe and memory.

God Almighty hath brought you to the very Gates of Death, and ſhewed you the Terrour, and Danger of it; and after that he had ſhewn you this Spectacle of your own Mortality, he hath marvellouſly reſcued and delivered you from that danger, and given you life, even from the dead, ſo that you are as a man new Born into the World, or returned to Life again, which now you ſeem as it were to begin: You have paſſed through thoſe two great Diſpenſations of the Divine Providence, thoſe two great Experiments, that God is pleaſed ſometimes to uſe towards the Children of men, namely, Correction and Deliverance, his Rod and his Staff: And therefore in all reaſonable conjecture, this is the moſt ſeaſonable time to give you a Lecture upon both, and thoſe admonitions which may be, render the one, and the other profitable unto you: And this I ſhall endeavour to do in theſe following Lines.

Firſt, you ſhall not need to fear that I intend to upbraid you with the errors of your Youth, or to expoſtulate with you touching them: For I do aſſure you, I do from my heart forgive you all your follies, and miſcarriages: And I do aſſure my ſelf,

that you have repented of them, and resolved againſt them for the time to come, and that thereupon God-almighty hath alſo fully forgiven what is paſt: And this is a great aſſurance thereof to me, in that he hath ſo wonderfully reſtored you, and given you as it were a new Life, wherein you may obey and ſerve him better than ever you yet did: And therefore if in this Letter, there be any touches concerning former vanities, aſſure your ſelf, they are not angry repetitions, but only neceſſary Cautions for your future ordering of your Life.

The buſineſs of theſe papers, is principally, to commend unto you, two general Remembrances, and certain Reſults and Collections, that ariſe from them, they are all ſeaſonable for your preſent Condition, and will be of ſingular uſe and benefit to you, in the whole enſuing Courſe of your Life.

Firſt, I would have you as long as you live, remember your late Sickneſs in all its Circumſtances, and theſe plain and profitable inferences, and advices, that ariſe from it.

Secondly, I would have you remember as long as you live, your great deliverance, and the ſeveral Circumſtances of it, and thoſe neceſſary duties that are incumbent upon you, in relation thereunto.

It is evident to daily experience, that while Afflictions are upon us, and while deliverances are freſh, they commonly have ſome good effect upon us: But as the Iron is no ſooner out of the fire, but it quickly returns to its old coldneſs, and hardneſs; ſo when the Affliction or Deliverance is paſt, we uſually forget them, count them common things, attribute them to Meanes and ſecond Cauſes: And ſo the good that Mankind ſhould gather from them vaniſh, and men grow quickly to be but what they were before they came; their ſick-bed promiſes are forgot, when the ſickneſs is over.

And therefore I ſhall give you an account of your ſickneſs, and of your recovery: And let them never be forgotten by you, as often as thoſe Spots and Marks in your Face are reflected to your view from the Glaſs, as often as this paper comes in your ſight, nay as often as you open your Eyes from ſleep, which were once cloſed, and likely never to open again; ſo often and more often remember your ſickneſs, and your recovery, and the admonitions that this paper lends you from the Conſideration of both.

First, therefore touching your late ſickneſs, I would have you remember theſe particulars: 1. The Diſeaſe it ſelf, in its own nature, is now become ordinarily very Mortal, eſpecially to thoſe of your Age: Look upon even the laſt years General Bill of Mortality, you will find near Two Thouſand dead of that Diſeaſe the laſt Year, and had not God been very merciful to you, you might have been one of that number, with as great likelyhood as any of them that Dyed of that Diſeaſe: 2. It was a Contagious Diſeaſe, that ſecluded the acceſs of your neareſt Relations: 3. Your ſickneſs ſurpriſed you upon a ſuddain, when you ſeemed to be in your full ſtrength: 4. Your ſickneſs rendred you Noyſom to your ſelf, and all that were about you, and a ſpectacle full of deformity, by the exceſs of your Diſeaſe beyond moſt that are ſick thereof: 5. It was a fierce and violent ſickneſs, it did not only take away the common ſupplies of nature, as digeſtion, ſleep, ſtrength, but it took away your memory, your underſtanding, and the very ſence of your own Condition, or of what might be conducible to your good: All that you could do was only to make your Condition more deſperate, in Caſe they that were about you, had not prevented it, and taken more

Care

Care for you, than you did or could for your ſelf: 6. Your ſickneſs was deſperate, in ſo much, that your Symptoms, and the violence of your diſtemper, were without Example; and you were in the very next degree to abſolute Rottenneſs, Putrefaction, and Death it ſelf.

Look upon the foregoing Deſcription, and remember that ſuch was your Condition, you were as ſad a Picture of Mortality, and Corruption, as any thing but Death it ſelf could make: Remember it: And Remember alſo, theſe enſuing Inſtructions, that may make that Remembrance profitable and uſeful to you.

Firſt, Remember that *Affliction cometh not forth of the duſt, nor doth trouble ſpring out of the ground,* Job 5. 6. But this terrible viſitation, was ſent to you from the wiſe overruling Providence of God: It is he that bringeth down to the Grave, and bringeth up again. It is true, that this Diſeaſe may ſeem common, but you may and muſt know, that there was more than the common hand of God in ſending it upon you, in ſuch a manner, and ſuch a meaſure, and at ſuch a ſeaſon, when you were grown up to a Competent Age, and degree of underſtanding, to make a due uſe of it, that you might ſee his juſtice in Afflicting you, and his goodneſs in delivering you from ſuch a danger.

Secondly,

Secondly, Remember that Almighty God is of moſt infinite Wiſdom, Juſtice and Mercy, he hath excellent ends in all his diſpenſations of his providences: He never ſends an Affliction, but it brings a meſſage with it, his Rod has a voice; a voice Commanding us, to ſearch and try our ways, and to examin our ſelves whether there hath not been ſome great ſin againſt him, or neglect of duty to him; a voice Commanding us to repent of what is a miſs, to humble our ſelves under his mighty hand, to turn to him that ſtriketh us, to ſeek to him by Prayer for deliverance, to depend upon him by Faith, in his mercy and power; to amend what is a miſs, to be more watchful, circumſpect, and obedient to him, in the future courſe of our lives, to fear to offend him: And if a man hear this voice, God hath his end of mercy and goodneſs, and man hath the fruit, benefit, and advantage of his Affliction, and commonly a Comfortable iſſue of it: Read often and attentively the 33th. Chapter of *Job*, from the beginning to the end.

Thirdly, Remember how uncertain, and frail a Creature man is, even in his ſeeming ſtrongeſt Age, and Conſtitution of health; even then a peſtilential Air, ſome evil humour in his blood, ſome obſtruction it may be

be of a little vein or artery, a little meat ill-digested, and a thousand small occurrences may upon a suddain, without any Considerable warning, plunge a man into a desperate and mortal sickness, and bring a man to the grave. Remember this terrible sickness seized upon you suddenly, pulled down your strength quickly, and brought you to the very brink of the Grave: And though God hath recovered you, you know not how soon you may be brought into the like Condition.

Fourthly, Remember therefore, that you make and keep your peace with God, and walk in his fear in the days of health; especially after so great a deliverance, and that for very many reasons: 1. You know not whether you may not be overtaken with sudden Death, and then it will be impossible for you to begin that work: 2. If you have sickness to give you warning of the approach of Death, yet you know not whether that sickness may not suddenly take away your senses, memory, or understanding, whereby you may be disabled to make your peace with God, or to exercise any serious thoughts concerning it: 3. But if that sickness give you fair warning, and take not away your understanding, yet your own experience cannot chuse but let you know,

that

that pain, and weakneſs, and diſtraction of mind, and impatience, and unquietneſs, are the common attendants of a ſick bed, and render that ſeaſon at leaſt very difficult, then to begin that greateſt and ſolemneſs, and moſt important buſineſs of a mans Life.

4. But if your ſickneſs be not ſo ſharp, but that it leaves you patience, and attention of mind for that great buſineſs, how do you know whether your heart ſhall be inclined to it? Repentance and Converſion to God is his gift, though it muſt be our endeavour: And though the merciful God, never refuſeth a repenting, returning offender; yet how can a man that all the time of his health hath neglected Almighty God, refuſed his invitations, and ſerved his luſts and his ſin, expect reaſonably, that God in the time of ſickneſs, when the man can ſerve his ſins no longer, will give him the grace of repentance?

What ever you do therefore, be ſure you make your peace with God, and keep it in the days of your health, eſpecially after ſo great a deliverance from ſo deſperate a ſickneſs.

Fifthly, Remember that your Condition is never ſo low, but that God hath power to deliver you, and therefore truſt in him: But remember withall, that your Condition

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is never so safe and secure, but you are within the reach of his power to bring you down: You are now by the mercy of God recovered from a terrible sickness, think not with your self that your turn is now served, and that you shall have no more need of him, and therefore that you may live as you list, and never regard your duty to him; deceive not your self herein, remember that this sickness, within two or three days brought you upon your knees, even from a seeming state of health: The Case is the same still, nay much worse, if this Affliction make you not better; Almighty God called you to love, and serve, and obey him, by the still voice of his word, by the perswasion of your Friends, by the advises and reproofs of your Father; and when these were not so effectual, (as I know you now wish they had been,) He sent a messenger that spake lowder, that would be heard, even this terrible sickness; and most certainly, if you have heard the voice of this Rod, (as I am hopeful you have) and thereupon entirely turn to your duty to God in all sincerity and obedience, it is the happiest providence that ever befell you, and you will upon sound Conviction, conclude with the Prophet, *It was good for me that I was Afflicted:* But on the other side, if notwithstanding this

voice,

voice of the Rod, you shall after your recovery turn again to folly, and vanity, and excess, and harden your self against this messenger; know for certain you are within the reach of the Divine Justice and Power: *And if you walk contrary to him, he will walk contrary to you, and punish you yet seven times for your sins*, Levit. 26. 24. I therefore give you that Counsel, that our Lord gave to him that he had healed, *Behold thou art made whole, go thy way and sin no more, lest a worse thing befall thee.* There is no contesting with Almighty God, he is ready and easie to be reconciled to the worst of men, upon humiliation and true repentance, but he is not to be Mastered or Conquered by obstinacy and opposition: *Who hath hardened himself against him and prospered?* Job 9. 4.

Sixthly, I would have you Remember, that sickness as well as death doth undeceive Mankind, and shews them where their true Wisdom lies: When a young man, especially, is in the full career of his vanity and pleasures, he thinks that Religion, and the fear of God, and walking according to his word, and the serious practice of duties of Religion towards God, prayer unto him, making our peace with him, are pitiful, low, foolish, and inconsiderable matters, and that those that practise them, are a sort

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of brain-ſick, melancholy, unintelligent perſons, that want wit or breeding, and underſtand not Themſelves or the World; that they are mere empty fancies and imaginations, whimſies, puritaniſm, and I know not what elſe: But on the other ſide, they think they are the brave men that live ſplendidly, deny themſelves no Pleaſure, can Drink, and Roar, and Whore, and Debauch, and wear the neweſt Faſhions; it may be, this Gallant or Wiſe man comes to be taken with a fit of ſickneſs, that tells him he muſt dye, Death is at the door, his Glaſs is almoſt out, and but a few ſands left in it: And then the man becomes quite of another judgment, he cries out of his former fooliſhneſs, he finds his pleaſures and intemperance and exceſs, are not only perfect follies, but madneſs, vexation, torment; and Religion and Prayer to God, and Devotion and Peace with God, they are now in requeſt; and now nothing but declamations againſt thoſe Courſes, which in his health he valued as the only Wiſdom; and nothing but promiſes of amendment, and reformation of Life, and Devotion to God; ſo ſickneſs hath undeceived the man, and given him a true and rectified judgment concerning Wiſdom, and Folly, quite contrary to what he had before. Therefore I would have you recollect your

ſelf.

ſelf, (and if the violence of your Diſeaſe left you at any time the uſe of your reaſon) bethink your ſelf what opinion you then had of intemperance, waſting of time, unlawful luſt, or any of thoſe ſins that formerly pleaſed you in your health, whether they did not appear to you in your ſickneſs, very vain, fooliſh, vexing things, ſuch as you wiſhed never to have been committed; and on the other ſide, what opinion you had in your ſickneſs touching Piety towards God, hearing of his word, calling upon his name, redeeming of time, modeſty, temperance: Whether thoſe actions of your life paſt, that ſavoured of theſe, were not Comfortable, and Contenting to you in your ſickneſs; whether your purpoſes, and promiſes, and reſolutions of your ſick-bed, were not full of ſuch thoughts as theſe: If it pleaſe God to recover me, I will never be ſuch a fool as I have beeen, I will never drink to exceſs, miſpend my time, I will never keep ſuch evil Company as I have done, I will be more devout towards God, more obedient to his word, more obſervant of good Counſel, and the like: And if you find it to be ſo, I muſt deſire you to remember that affliction, is the School of Wiſdom, it rectifies mens judgments; and I muſt again deſire you, to keep your judgment right ſtill, and ſet not

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the recovery of your health become the loſs of your wits; but in your health retain that Wiſdom your ſickneſs taught you, and practice what you then promiſed: *Remember he is the wiſeſt man that provides for his latter end:* Deut. 32. 29.

Seventhly, Remember by your former ſickneſs, how pitiful an inconſiderable thing the Body of man is; how ſoon is the ſtrength of it turned to faintneſs, and weakneſs, the beauty of it to uglineſs and deformity, the conſiſtency of it to putrefaction and rottenneſs; and then remember how fooliſh a thing it is, to be proud of ſuch a Carcaſs, to ſpend all, or the greateſt part of our time in triming and adorning it, in ſtudying new Faſhions, and new Poſtures, and new Devices to ſet it out: In ſpending our time and proviſions in pampering it, in pleaſing the Appetite; and yet this is the chief buſineſs of moſt young men of this Age: Learn therefore Humility and Lowlineſs, learn to furniſh thy Noble and Immortal part, thy Soul, with Religion, Grace, Knowledge, Virtue, Goodneſs, for that will retain it to eternity: How miſerable is that mans Condition, that whiles ſickneſs hath made his Body a deformed, weak, loathſom thing, ſin hath made his Soul as ugly, and deformed; The Grave will heal or cover the deformity

of the former, but the Soul will carry its Ulcers and Deformity (without Repentance) into the next World: Learn and remember therefore, to have thy greateſt Care for thy Nobleſt part, furniſh it with Piety, Grace, Knowledge, the Fear and Love of God, Faith in Chriſt: And as for thy Body, uſe it Decently, Soberly and Comely, that it may be a fit Inſtrument for thy Soul to uſe in this Life, but be not proud of it, nor make it thy chiefeſt care and buſineſs to adorn, much leſs defile it.

Eighthly, Remember to avoid intemperance and ſinful Luſts: It is true ſickneſs and diſeaſes, and finally death, are by the Laws and Conſtitutions of our nature incident to all Mankind: But intemperance, exceſs of Eating and Drinking, Drunkenneſs, Whoreing, Uncleanneſs and diſorder bring more diſeaſes, eſpecially upon young men, and deſtroy more young, ſtrong, healthy men, than the Plague, or other natural or accidental diſtempers: They weaken the Brain, Corrupt the Blood, decay and diſtemper the Spirit, diſorder and putrefie the humours, and make the body a very bag full of putrefaction; Some diſeaſes are as it were ſpecifical, and appropriate to theſe vices, other diſeaſes are commonly occaſioned by them, by their inflammation and putrifacti-

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on of the Blood and humours: And all Diſeaſes, even thoſe that are Epidemical, Natural or Caſual, yet are rendred by thoſe vices far more ſharp, laſting, malignant and incurable, by that ſtock of Corrupted matter, they lodge in the body to feed thoſe Diſeaſes, and that impotency that theſe vices bring upon Nature to reſiſt them: Therefore if you ever expect to have as well a ſound body, as a ſound mind, carefully avoid intemperance and debauchery: The moſt temperate and ſober perſons are ſubject to ſickneſs, weakneſs and Diſeaſes, but the intemperate can never be long without them.

And thus I have done with the proſpect of your Diſeaſe, and at leaſt many of theſe profitable uſes you may gather from the remembrance of it.

II. I ſhall now in the ſecond place, put you in Remembrance of your Deliverance, touching which, you muſt remember: 1. That it was a great, eminent, and extraordinary Deliverance, you need no other evidence of it, than by looking back upon the greatneſs and ſeverity of your Diſeaſe before-mentioned: 2. It was a deliverance by the immediate power and mercy of that God, that ſent you the Viſitation.

Una eademque manus vulnus opemque tulit.

If you had been delivered by the immediate

efficacy of means, yet you are blind if you ſee not that the efficacy of means depends upon the providence of God, it is he that provides it, and that makes means effectual. But in this deliverance God hath pleaſed to hedge up (as it were) your way from attributing it to means, and hath given you an indication, that it was done by his own immediate power, and that he delivered you above, and beyond means: It is true, you had a very able and careful Phyſitian, and very great attendance and care was uſed about you: But when your Phyſitian and all that were about you, began to deſpair of your recovery, when means proved ineffectual, when the ſtrength of Nature was exhauſted, and baffled by your Diſeaſe, God Almighty upon a ſuddain, and beyond expectation, relieved you, and as it were by his own hand brought you back from the very threſhold of the Grave: And this he did, that you and all about you, and all your Relations might take notice of it, that it was he that did it.

And thus Almighty God hath exerciſed towards you, two great Experiments, the firſt of his ſeverity, the ſecond of his mercy: And as your Sickneſs and Rod had its voice, (a lowd and ſharp voice) ſo your recovery and deliverance hath its voice alſo, a ſweet, gentle, and (I hope) effectual voice; and I will as ſhortly as I can tell you what it is. Firſt,

First, Remember this benefit, remember it was reached out unto you, from the mere power, goodness, and mercy of God: Remember evermore in your Heart and Soul, to be thankful to him for it: Remember as long as you live upon all occasions to acknowledge it; daily to return upon your knees humble thanks for it, to him that had regard to you, and remembred you in your low Estate, to him that forgave your Iniquities, and healed your Disease, to him that did this for you when all means failed, that did it for you, when you had not the understanding to call upon him for it; to him that did it for you, that deserved it not, for you that had provoked him, and neglected him too much in the time of your health. This God it was, that thus delivered you; Read often the 103 *Psalm* attentively, and apply it to your own Condition, it will do you good.

2. Remember to acknowledge this goodness of God with all humility; your deliverance was not the purchase of your own power, nor of your own desert, it was an Act of the free and undeserved goodness of God; what Almighty God said by *Moses* unto the *Israelites*, Deut. 9. 4. 6. I shall say to you with some variation; understand therefore that the Lord thy God hath not

given thee this deliverance for thy Righteousness: No it is the mere effect of his own goodness, and to give you opportunity to praise him, and serve him, better than ever you did before.

3. Remember that although great deliverances, require your great acknowledgments, yet there is somewhat more required, namely, a real practical glorifying of God, by ordering your Conversation aright, by serving him, pleasing him, obeying him, living to his honour: This Almighty God expects as well as praises, and acknowledgments: As the end of God in afflictions is to make men better, so the end of God in deliverances is to make men better, and if we are not the better men by both dispensations, we do as much as in us lies disappoint Almighty God in his design, and disappoint our selves of the benefit and advantage intended in both, and easily to be gained by both. This therefore is the voice of this deliverance, it calls sweetly, and gently indeed, but earnestly and effectually for amendment of life: And that upon two great and moving arguments: 1. Your recovery and great deliverance calls for this from you, upon the accompt of common ingenuity and good nature, which obligeth a man to be observant and dutiful to his benefactor:

God

God Almighty is the greateſt Benefactor, and hath manifeſted himſelf ſuch to you, upon a viſible and eminent account; this is engagement enough upon the account of common humanity, to be dutiful and obedient to him: When therefore you are at any time by the Temptation of your own Corruption, or by the ſollicitation of evil perſons, ſollicited to evil Actions: Conſider thus with your ſelf, Is this a becoming return to that God, that hath thus wonderfully delivered me? Is this the requital that I ſhall make to him for his mercy? Shall I pleaſe a vain Luſt, or a vain Companion, and diſpleaſe the great God of Heaven and Earth, that hath thus delivered me and done me more good, than all the World could ever do me, or than I can ever recompence? *Do ye thus requite the Lord, O ye fooliſh People, and unwiſe? Is not he thy Father that hath bought thee? Hath he not made thee, and eſtabliſhed thee?* Deut. 32. 6. 2. This mercy calls for your obedience to God, in an eminent manner upon the account of common prudence and diſcretion; the benefit of your obedience to him will be your own, your own happineſs in this Life, and in that to come: There is no greater moral ſecurity againſt future dangers and troubles, than obedience, and reformation of Life upon great deliverances received, nor is

there any greater invitation of new troubles and miſchiefs, than ingratitude, diſobedience, and great ſins after great mercies and deliverances: There is a kind of certain and infallible connexion between great ſins, after great mercies received, and great Judgments to follow, *Ingentia beneficia, ingentia peccata, ingentia ſupplicia.* Again, as I have formerly told you, you do not know how ſoon you may ſtand in need of the ſame mercy, and goodneſs of God, which you have formerly found: You are never out of the reach of his power, and the neceſſity of his help; what ever you do, therefore never diſoblige him, by whom you Live, and whoſe extraordinary mercy you may ſtand in need of, you know not how ſoon: There is nothing in the World doth more provoke God, than neglect, forgetfulneſs, or willful diſobedience after ſignal mercies: Theſe provoke the merciful God to a ſeverity of the higheſt kind, becauſe the ſweeteſt and moſt obliging call of mercy and deliverance is neglected: Read the firſt Chapter of the *Proverbs* attentively.

And the merciful God hath given us a plain Rule and Method, how he may be ſerved, obeyed, and pleaſed, he hath given us a plain diſcovery of his will in the Scriptures of both Teſtaments; Read that often,

you

you have it by you, and you need not go far to find what is your Maker's Will, and what that obedience is, that he requires as the return of this, and all other his mercies: Yet I think it not amiss, to mind you of some particulars, that may be useful for you upon this occasion, and to direct you how particularly to improve it, and so order your future Life in some measure answerable to it.

1. I would have you make it your first business after your perfect Recovery, to Consider the course of your Life past, since you came to the Age of discretion, and see what hath been amiss in it; whether you have not neglected Religion, and the Duties of it too much, as Prayer, hearing the Word Preached, observing the Lords day, receiving the Sacrament; whether you have not been guilty of intemperance, excess of drinking, wantonness, uncleanness, idleness, mispending your time, and those supplies which have been allowed you for your maintenance; whether you have not too much delighted in vain and sinful, and disorderly Company, vanity and expence in Apparel: And if any such, or the like faults have been, repent of them, be sorry for them, resolve against them; and let the future course of your Life be amended in relation thereunto:

I have before told you, that your heavenly Father hath forgiven you, and I have forgiven you, neither do I mention these things to upbraid you for them, but that you upon the consideration of what hath been amiss, may be thereby the better enabled to rectify and set in order your future Life: If this be done and practised, I will reckon your late sickness and distemper one of the greatest blessings that ever befel you.

2. I would have you always keep a habit of the fear of God upon your heart; Consider his presence, order your Life as in his presence, Consider that he always sees you, beholds, and takes notice of you, and especially whether you carry your self answerable to this great deliverance, it is one of those Talents for which he will expect an Account from you.

3. I would have you frequently and thankfully consider of the great Love of God in Jesus Christ, whom he hath given to be the Instructor, and Governour, and Sacrifice for the sins of you and all Mankind, through whom upon Repentance you have assurance of the remission of your sins and eternal Life; and frequently consider how great an ingagement this is upon you, and all Mankind, to live according to such a hope and such a mercy.

4. I would have you every morning read a portion of the Holy Scriptures, 'till you have read the Bible from the beginning to the end: Obſerve it well, read it reverently and attentively, ſet your heart upon it, and lay it up in your memory, and make it the direction of your life; it will make you a wiſe and a good man: I have been acquainted ſomewhat with Men and Books, and have had long experience in Learning, and in the World: There is no Book like the Bible for excellent Learning, Wiſdom, and Uſe, and it is want of underſtanding in them, that think or ſpeak otherwiſe.

5. Every morning and every evening, upon your knees with all reverence and attention of mind, return hearty thanks to God for his mercy to you, and particularly for this deliverance, deſire his Grace to enable you to walk in ſome meaſure anſwerable to it, beg his Providence to protect you, his Grace to direct you, to keep you from evil Actions, and evil Perſons, and evil occurrences, beg his pardon for your ſin, and the continuance of his favour, always concluding with the Lords Prayer.

6. Obſerve conſcionably the Lords day to keep it Holy, avoid idle Company, idle Diſcourſe, Recreations, and ſecular imployments upon that day; reſort twice that day

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to the publick Prayers and Sermon, come early to it, be attentive at it, keep your Eyes and Mind from roveing after vain thoughts or objects; and ſpend the reſt of that day, that is free from neceſſary occaſions, in Reading the Scriptures, or ſome good Books of Divinity.

7. Once ever Term at leaſt come preparedly, and reverently to the Holy Communion, receive it with great reverence, and thankfulneſs, and due Conſideration of the end of its inſtitution: Renew your Covenant with Almighty God that you made in Baptiſm, and to live Soberly, Righteouſly, and Godly before him, and beg his Grace and Strength to perform it.

And as thoſe directions before, do more ſpecially relate to Almighty God, and your deportment immediately towards him; ſo theſe that follow, more eſpecially relate to your ſelf and others, and your moral Converſation: Therefore,

8. Be very moderate in Eating and Drinking, Drunkenneſs is the great vice of the time, and by Drunkenneſs I do mean not only groſs Drunkenneſs, but alſo Tipling, Drinking exceſſively, and immoderately, or more than is convenient or neceſſary; avoid thoſe Companies that are given to it, come not into thoſe places that are devoted

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to that beaſtly Vice, namely, Taverns and Alehouſes, avoid and refuſe thoſe devices that are uſed to occaſion it, as Drinking and Pledging of Healths: Be reſolute againſt it, and when your reſolution is once known, you will never be ſollicited to it: The *Rechabites* were Commanded by their Father not to drink Wine, and they obeyed it, and had a bleſſing for it; my Command to you is not ſo ſtrict, I allow you the moderate uſe of Wine and ſtrong Drink at your meals, I only forbid you the exceſs, or unneceſſary uſe of it, and thoſe Places and Companies, and Artifices that are Temptations to it.

9. Avoid Wanton and Laſcivious Actions, Speeches and Company: Read *Proverbs* 2, 5, 6, 7. 9. A Whore hunts for the precious Life of a man, and that vice brings a ruine with it to the Body, Soul, and Eſtate: If you cannot Conveniently contain your ſelf in a ſingle Life, and be of Competent health, Marry, but with the Adviſe and Counſel of your Father, while he lives.

10. Be frugal of your time (it is one of the beſt Jewels we have) and to that end avoid Idleneſs, it conſumes your time, and lays you open to worſe inconveniences; let your Recreations be healthy, and Creditable, and Moderate, without too much expence of time, or money: Go not to Stage-plays, they

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are a moſt profuſe waſting of time; value time by that eſtimate we would have of it, when we want it, what would not a ſick-man give for thoſe portions of time of health, that he had formerly improvidently waſted?

11. Bee diligent in your Study and Calling; it is an Act of duty to Almighty God that requires it, and it will be your wiſdom and benefit; it will be a good expence of time, a prevention from a Thouſand inconveniences and temptations, that otherwiſe will befall a man; it will furniſh you with knowledge and underſtanding, give you the advantage and means of a comfortable and plentiful ſubſiſtence, and make you a ſupport, comfort and benefit to your Friends and Country.

12. Be frugal in your expences, live within the Compaſs of that Exhibition, that Gods Providence and your Father's abilities ſhall ſupply you withall; it is enough to maintain an honeſt provident man, and ten times more will not be enough for a profuſe mind: A frugal man will live Comfortably and Plentifully upon a little; and a profuſe man will live beggerly, neceſſitouſly and in continual want, whatever his ſupplies be.

13. In

13. In all your expences consider before hand: Can I not be well enough without this that I am about to buy? Is there an absolute necessity of it? Can I not forbear 'till I am in a better Condition to compass it? If I buy or borrow can I pay? And when? And am I sure? will this expence hold out? How shall I bring about the next Quarter, or the next year? If young men would but have the patience to consider, and ask themselves Questions of the like nature, it would make them Considerate in their Expences and provident for the future; and these Considerations will in a special manner concern you, in respect of your Fathers great Expences for you, which though I have forgiven, and forgotten, I would have you remember with Gratitude and Caution.

14. The vanity of Young-men in loving fine Cloaths, and new Fashions, and valuing themselves by them, is one of the most Childish pieces of folly that can be, and the occasion of great profuseness and undoing of Young-men: Avoid curiosity and too much expensiveness in your Apparel: Let your Apparel be comely, plain, decent, cleanly not curious or costly; it is the sign of a weak Head-piece, to be sick for every new Fashion, or to think himself the better in it, or the worse without it.

15. Be

15. Be careful what Company you conſort with, and much more careful what perſons you grow intimate with; chuſe ſober, wiſe, learned, honeſt, Religious Company, you will gain Learning and Wiſdom, and improve your ſelf in Virtue and Goodneſs, by converſing with them: But avoid debauched, fooliſh, intemperate, prodigal, atheiſtical, prophane Company, as you would avoid a Plague; they will Corrupt and undo you, they are a ſort of the moſt pitiful fools in the World, and familiar acquaintance and converſation with them, will endanger to make you like them.

16. Weigh and conſider your words before you ſpeak them, and do not talk at random or at a venture; let your words be few, and to the purpoſe, be more ready to hear others than to ſpeak your ſelf; accuſtom your ſelf to ſpeak leiſurely, and deliberately, it will be a means to make you ſpeak warily and conſiderately.

17. Be very careful to ſpeak truth, and beware of lying; as lying is diſpleaſing to God, ſo it is offenſive to man, and always at the latter end returns to the reproach or diſadvantage of him that uſeth it; it is an evidence of a weak and unmanly mind. Be careful that you believe not haſtily ſtrange news, and ſtrange ſtories, and be much more careful

careful that you do not report them, though at the second hand, for if it prove an untruth, (as commonly strange stories prove so) it brings an imputation of levity upon him that reports it, and possibly some disadvantage to others.

18. Take heed what you promise, see that it be just, and honest, and lawful; and what is in your power, honestly and certainly to perform: And when you have so promised, be true to your word. It is for the most part the fashion of inconsiderate and Young-men, (especially that run in debt) they will with great asseverations, promise precise payment, at this or that day; when either they certainly know they cannot perform, or at least have no probable assurance that they can do it; and when their turn is served, they are as backward in performance, as they were before liberal in their promises. Breach of promises and lying are much of a nature, and commonly go together, and are arguments of an impotent and unmanly mind.

19. Beware of Gaming, it is the suddennest Consumption of an Estate that can be, and that vice seldom goes alone; commonly debauchery of all kinds accompanies it: Besides it makes a man of a wild,

vaſt and unſettled mind; and ſuch men are impatient of an honeſt Calling, or of moderate or honeſt gain.

20. Run not into debt either for Wares ſold, or Money borrowed; be content to want things that are not of abſolute neceſſity, rather than to run upon the ſcore; ſuch a man pays at the latter end a third part more than the Principal comes to, and is in perpetual ſervitude to his Creditors, lives uncomfortably, is neceſſitated to increaſe his debts, to ſtop his Creditors mouths, and many times falls into deſperate Courſes.

21. Be reſpectfull to all, familiar and intimate with few, be Grateful to your Benefactors, eſpecially to thoſe, who under God, were inſtrumental for your good, in your late ſickneſs, and return your thanks to them; to your Father that ſpared no coſt for your Recovery, to your Doctor that was exceedingly diligent about you, to thoſe that attended you in your ſickneſs, to thoſe that together with your Father often prayed to God for your Recovery, and for a bleſſing upon this Affliction, whoſe names you ſhall in due time particularly know. But above all, to Almighty God, who not only provided and bleſſed the means, but ſaved, and delivered you

you above means, and when means failed.

22. Laſtly, I ſhall conclude with one advice more, without the obſervance whereof my labour in writing this long Epiſtle will be probably fruitleſs: Be not wiſe in your own conceit, this is the unhappy error, and many times the ruine of Young-men eſpecially: They are uſually raſh, giddy, and inconſiderate, and yet extreamly confident of that which they have leaſt reaſon to truſt, namely their own underſtanding, which renders them moſt reſerved from them that are willing and beſt able to adviſe them, impatient of reprof, love to be flattered, and ſo become uncapable of good and wiſe Councel, 'till their follies have reduced them to extream ſtraits and inconveniences; ſuſpect therefore your own judgment: Adviſe often with your Father, eſpecially in all things of moment; be glad of his Councel, and be Contented and willing to follow it, and to guide your Life according to it; at leaſt 'till ripeneſs of Age, Obſervation, and Experience, have enabled you better to adviſe your ſelf: This is an eaſie, and ready, and cheap way of attaining Wiſdom, and avoiding of infinite inconveniences.

And thus I have in this long Epiſtle, given you the means how you may improve both your ſickneſs, and recovery, to the Glory of God, and your own benefit.

I ſhall therefore Conclude with two Conſiderations, that may the more ingage you to this uſe of both theſe diſpenſations.

1. The danger is great, if Afflictions make not a man more humble and dutiful, and the danger is yet greater, if great deliverances and mercies do not make a man more thankful and obedient to God; becauſe it is the moſt obliging method that the Gracious God can uſe towards the Children of men, for that end, in this Life: And the neglect of that invitation, adds Ingratitude and Contempt to the neglect of it.

2. The benefit that you will receive by making a good uſe of theſe two diſpenſations, in improving your dutifulneſs and obedience to God, will be ſingular and excellent: 1. It will make you a wiſe man, by making you a Good, and a Religious man: Believe it from your Father, who will not deceive you, nay, believe it from a greater than your Father, the very Spirit of

of truth, who cannot deceive you; the true fear of God, is the only true Wisdom: Read *Deut.* 4. 6. *Job* 28. 28. *Psal.* 111. 10. *Prov.* 1. 7. *Prov.* 9. 10. *Eccles.* 12. 13. and very many more declarations there are of this great truth: 2. It will make you a happy man, it will give you the Favour and Love of God, which is better than Life it self: You shall have his Mercy to pardon you, his Providence to protect you, his Wisdom to direct you, his Goodness to bless you, and to forgive, and forget whatsoever hath heretofore been done amiss by you: This will make all Conditions Comfortable to you, whether Life or Death, Sickness or Health: By this means you may be a Comfort to your Father, a support to your Brothers and Sisters, an Instrument of good to your Country, and attain an Honest, Credible, and Competent Subsistence in this World, and an everlasting inheritance of Glory and Immortality in the World to come. Thus I have given you a large Letter of sound and good Counsel: Set your heart to it, and observe and remember it: We see how unstable our Lives are, you nor I know not how soon, either or both of us may leave this World; It may be, this may be

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the laſt paper of Advice that your Father may give you: But however it ſhall pleaſe God to deal with you or me, touching our continuance in this World, yet let me leave this with you, in the cloſe of this Letter: If I ſhall find that theſe directions are dutifully obſerved, I ſhall be ready from time to time, freely to adviſe and direct you; and as I have paſſed by your former Extravagancies, ſo I ſhall thereby have great aſſurance, that God hath bleſſed this Viſitation to you. But on the other ſide, if I ſhall find that you neglect my Counſels, that you make light of them, that you ſtill purſue thoſe Courſes that will certainly be bitterneſs in the end, I muſt then tell you, I ſhall pray for you, and be ſorry for you with my heart; but I ſhall not eaſily be perſwaded to give any more Advices or Counſels, where I find them deſpiſed or neglected. In this paper there are many things omitted, which might have been inſerted; but the conſtant Reading of the Holy Scriptures will ſupply unto you that defect: I have choſen only in this paper to mention ſuch things which are ſeaſonable for you upon this occaſion. God Almighty hath not been wanting to you in Admonition, Cor-

rection,

rection, Mercy, and Deliverance; neither hath your Father been wanting to you in Education, Counsel, Care, and Expence: I pray God Almighty bless all unto you. This is the Prayer of,

Your Loving Father,

MATTHEW HALE.

FINIS.